

Grodins to Open in Kaiser Center Mall

Grodins of California, Oakland-based firm which operates a chain of nine men's wear stores in Northern California, will open its new executive headquarters store in Kaiser Center tomorrow.

Civic and business leaders will participate in ribbon-cutting ceremonies at noon, touching off a three-day schedule of attractions in the Kaiser Center Mall.

It will be the first major new store opening in downtown Oakland since 1960, said Arnold Michaels, Grodins president.

LEADERS TO ATTEND

Those expected to take part in the opening day ceremonies include Oakland Mayor John A. Reading; William F. Knowland, Chamber of Commerce president and Tribune publisher; W. A. Sparling, general manager of the Chamber; A. B. Ordway, vice president of Kaiser Center, Inc.; Edgar F. Kaiser, president of Kaiser Steel; Frank Scarr, manager of Kaiser Center; Cyril Magnin's, and Walter Newman, manager of Joseph Magnin's women's wear store in Kaiser Center.

Grodins takes over a large part of the area formerly occupied by the White House department store before it went out of business late last year.

Seven other stores, which located previously in the Mall,

are joining with Grodins in the opening celebration along with Joseph Magnin's, which has been in the Kaiser Center since it opened.

The other new stores in the Mall are Dorothy's ladies apparel, formerly in the Kaiser Center office building; Bay Ticket Office; Mr. Des Rosiers hair styling; Expectation Maternity Shop; Janko Jewelers; Merle Norman Cosmetics and Merritt Card'n Party.

Quarters are being readied in the Mall for at least three other stores on the ground floor of the Mall.

The new Grodins store has a total area of more than 25,000 square feet, double that of the old Oakland headquarters at Broadway and 12th Street, and cost about \$750,000 in improvements and furnishings. Free customer parking is available in the 1500-car Kaiser Center Garage.

OLD LONDON-DECOR

Grodins Kaiser Center store was designed by Leo Roselyn Associates of San Francisco to combine elements of traditional and contemporary decor. Mural tapestries, reproductions of 19th century London chandeliers and carriage lanterns, old lithographs and antique furniture recreate an Old London atmosphere.

Major departments in the new

store will include men's clothing, sportswear, furnishings and shoes. It has an enlarged Rams Head shop for young men, modeled after shops on London's Carnaby Street.

Michaels said the Rams Head shop will make Grodins the only store in Northern California featuring three of the four best known natural shoulder brands, Cricketeer, Susse and Norman Hilton.

The store will feature also a special Lady Ramshead sportswear department for women and a boutique filled with art objects and gifts selected by Mr. and Mrs. Michaels on their extensive travels abroad.

Louis C. de George, who has been with Grodins since 1946,

will manage the new store. His assistant will be Ted French, who started as a salesman in the firm's Walnut Creek store four years ago and was promoted to assistant manager there.

Grodins of California grew from the original firm of Schwartz & Grodin which operated in the Bay Area since 1908. The company became Grodins of California in 1951 with the opening of its first suburban store in Walnut Creek. Other stores are now in Hayward, Alameda, Berkeley, San Jose, Mountain View and Sacramento. Another is planned to open in San Francisco's Stonestown Shopping Center this fall.

Opening day events include the showing of National Hockey

New Grodins Open at Kaiser Center

TRE AUG 5 1966

One of the finest new stores in the Bay Area for men, Grodins of California, is now officially open for business.

It is the new executive headquarters store of the nine-store chain, located in the Kaiser Center.

It was opened yesterday in a brief ribbon-cutting ceremony attended by Arnold Michaels, president of Grodins, M. B. Michaels, vice-president of Grodins; Fred Maggiora, vice mayor of Oakland; William F. Knowland, president of the Oakland Chamber of Commerce and publisher of The Tribune, and E. E. Trefethen Jr., vice president of Kaiser Industries.

Following the ceremony, a luncheon was held in the Kaiser Center.

It was attended by representatives of seven other new stores now open in the mall of the center. They are Dorothy's Ladies Apparel, formerly in the main Kaiser office building; Bay Ticket Office; Mr. Des Rosiers Hair Styling; Expectation Maternity Shop; Janko Jewelers; Merle Norman Cosmetic and Merritt Card'n Party.

The other opening day events included films of the National Hockey League Stanley Cup playoff in the auditorium. Today at noon there was to be a demonstration of the Bay Bombers women's Roller Derby team.

The new store features London decor, and has one of the largest selections of British clothing in the Bay Area. It also

has top lines of domestic menswear.

Remodeling cost \$750,000, and the store has twice the space of the old Oakland headquarters.

Free parking has been made available in the Kaiser Center garage.

In addition to the menswear department, there is a special "Lady Ramshead" sportswear department for women, and a boutique filled with art objects and gifts selected by Michaels and his wife in their travels around the world.

Quality's New Home

MAR - 8 1973

Last evening at Kaiser Center a new department of Grodins, called the Westgate Shop, was formally opened. A quiet and richly appointed shop within the store, it caters to men who demanded the finest in tailored-to-measure clothing and shirts. Grodins president Arnold Michaels regards it as "a reversal of the trend to standardization and deteriorating service, as it will offer highly personalized service and complete attention to individual whims and desires."

Great emphasis will be placed on quality fabrics and regardless of the season, Grodins Westgate Shop will carry a full line of year-round weight, summer weight and winter weight materials, a note of special importance to the traveler. Silks, mohairs, cashmere, vicuna and camel-shair will be among the 2000 selections available. cashmere Suit prices will be from \$185 and, for the present, only the Kaiser Center store and San Francisco will have Westgate Shops where, says Michaels, "We shall continue to uphold our built-in reputation for excellence in this highly specialized shop."

Grodins

reopens store in Oakland

FRI AUG 22 1986

By David Tong
The Tribune

Grodins of California hopes smaller means better when it comes to one of its outlets that reopened yesterday at the Kaiser Center in Oakland.

Five months ago, the San Lorenzo-based clothing chain shut down the store at 20th and Webster streets for \$300,000 worth of remodeling.

After its Kaiser Center lease expired, Grodins decided to remain at the location but in a much smaller store. Instead of a 14,000 square-foot site, it signed a new lease for at least 10 years for 6,000 square feet of the old site. The remaining space is taken up by a new Casual Corner shop that is under construction.

And Bob Burke, vice president and general manager of the Kaiser Center, said yesterday that "the probability is very high that a high-quality, national women's fashion retail outlet, totally new to Oakland" will lease another 6,000 square feet of space in the center. A decision is expected around mid-September.

Economics played an important role in Grodins' decision to downsize.

"Specialty retail stores tend to be smaller these days. It creates a sense of intimacy and gives us more opportunity for personalized service. The high cost of real estate was also a factor," said Louis Brownstone, corporate secretary for the privately held clothing chain.

Brownstone said Grodins never considered giving up the site, one that it has held for 20 years.

Grodins is a household word in Oakland. It opened its first store on 12th and Broadway in 1909. It now has 36 stores in California, Oregon

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and Nevada, including nine in the Eastbay. The chain also owns Tannery West, a subsidiary with 27 stores across the country.

Yesterday's grand reopening was a bright spot for a clothing chain that is going through difficult times.

Earlier this month, Arnold Michaels, board chairman and majority stockholder, said he was no longer seeking a buyer for the chain.

Instead, Michaels retained a consulting firm to find out why the chain had a drop in profits last year. Grodins had \$60 million in sales last year, with the Kaiser Center outlet reporting

about \$2 million in revenues. The company declined to discuss the drop in earnings.

Despite the downsizing of the Kaiser Center store, Brownstone feels it can ring up the same amount in sales.

He said the store will do well because it is located in the midst of a burgeoning business district where several highrises have been completed in the past year or so.

"We feel strongly about our future in Oakland. Our volume has stayed constant the past five years," he said.

"There's starting to be an awareness of Oakland retail," said Burke of the Kaiser Center. "There's a real interest develop-

ing in Oakland now."

The refurbished Grodins store sports a modern, chic appearance — with a soft gray look and piped-in music.

It seemed to please customers. "This is beautiful. It's very nice," enthused Helen Taub, who stopped by to see how the store looked shortly after yesterday's reopening.

Despite the new look, Jeff Anthony, manager of the store, said there are still several touches from the old store, including some of the old columns and antique tables.

In connection with the reopening, the store has brought in \$750,000 in new inventory.

Grodins clothing chain closing; 550 to lose jobs

WED NOV 5 1986

By David Tong
The Tribune

The 77-year-old Grodins retail clothing chain, bought by new owners less than three months ago, is going out of business this month, The Tribune has learned.

The closure will render jobless as many as 550 employees at 36 Grodins outlets in California, Oregon and Nevada. Grodins employs 245 employees in its Bay Area stores.

It was the second major shutdown of a retail operation

in the Bay Area announced in less than a month. Lucky Stores announced on Oct. 9 plans to close its 80-store Gemco chain by the end of the year, a move that will result in the layoff of 14,000 employees in California, Nevada and Arizona, including 2,000 in the greater Bay Area.

Yesterday, officials for the new Grodins owner, CRO America Inc. of South San Francisco, were in meetings throughout the day and un-

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Grodins retail clothing chain to be closed

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available for comment.

But several Grodins employees told The Tribune that Grodins officials had told them in meetings Monday afternoon that the stores will be shut down for several days before a liquidation sale is held in about two weeks.

The decision to close the stores left employees surprised and angry. "I think that's just the way the country is going. People are more interested in making money than they are in people," said one employee who asked not to be named.

The action by CRO also stunned union officials because CRO purchased Grodins from Arnold Michaels, the principal shareholder and chairman, for an undisclosed price in late August with the idea of expanding the retail business and shifting the line of merchandise.

Phil Tucker, a spokesman for Region 14 of the United Food

and Commercial Workers Union, said CRO America officials notified the union late Monday that it intended to close the business because it "was not making any money."

Donald Lee, vice president of CRO, said at the time of the purchase CRO was considering increasing the sales of women's clothing to as much as 50 percent of volume. He also said there would be a reorientation of the men's merchandise from the current emphasis on suits to casual and sports clothing.

Michaels, who was unavailable for comment yesterday, said in August he was delighted with the prospects of "new growth" for Grodins under its new ownership.

The closure led one employee to speculate that CRO may be taking the action because it believes the chain's various assets — the merchandise and long-term leases — are worth more than the company as a whole.

Another employee wondered whether the action was simply a "clever" move by CRO to shut down Grodins so that it can reopen the stores with nonunion employees.

According to Tucker, union officials plan to meet with Grodins officials later this week to discuss the rights of the employees and their severance package.

The sudden turn of events was another turbulent chapter in Grodins history since Michaels announced Grodins was for sale last May.

Dissatisfied with the earnings of the company in the past fiscal year, Michaels had been trying to sell Grodins since last spring before he reached an agreement with CRO.

Under the terms of the August sale, Michaels retained control of 26 Tannery West leather stores where he is chairman.

Grodins, originally called Schwartz & Grodin, was founded in 1909. Michaels started with the company in 1944 at the original Oakland store at 12th and Broadway. He became general manager after the death of the

senior Grodin partner and brought the company in 1955 from the Grodin family.

The purchase of Grodins by CRO was announced a few days after Grodins reopened its remodeled store at 20th and Webster streets in Oakland at a cost of \$300,000.

Michaels said at the time of the August sale that he and his family held an 87 percent interest in Grodins with the remaining interest held by Jack Rose, president of Grodins for many years, and other Grodins employees.

CRO America owns two Cale Thomas stores in San Francisco and stores in Burlingame and Beverly Hills. The company also has a sales catalogue branch, which operates under the name of Cale Thomas New Classics. It is also the Bay Area franchisee for Aca Jose sportswear stores.

Caleb Chan is president of CRO America and its parent company, International Land Group. The same Chan is one of the original backers of the \$190 million redevelopment project in Oakland's Chinatown.